



BOROUGH OF BRIDPORT.

The Annual Report of Dr. Walter E. Manby, M.B., Medical Officer of Health, upon the health and sanitary state of the Borough in the year 1913.

I am submitting to you to-night my annual report upon the health and sanitary state of Bridport in 1913. The area of the district is 672 acres, inclusive of water. The population is estimated at 5,919, a large proportion of which is engaged in industrial occupations. The climate is mild and healthy, but characterised by moisture. It is in consequence relatively cold in winter. The rainfall in 1913 amounted to 32·65 inches. In June, July, and August it was only 2·48 inches against an average for these months for the past 22 years of 7·06. The soil is clay. The water supply is derived from a heading driven into the side of the hills at Litton Cheney, which gives a constant supply to the town. There is a storage reservoir for emergencies, holding 3,000,000 gallons. When the reservoir is in use, the water is passed through a sand filter bed. During the year a continuous supply was maintained without a complaint of any kind. The quarterly reports on samples sent for analysis were uniformly satisfactory. There are 101 dwellings in the district supplied by wells, pumps, and springs. Samples of water from two suspected wells were analysed. They were found to be satisfactory and fit for drinking purposes.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.—The drainage of the borough is conducted on the water carriage system, the main sewer discharging into the sea. During the summer months the flow is intermittent. The sewer on the west side of the harbour at West Bay—originally discharging into the harbour—is now being connected with the main outfall sewer on the east beach.

THE CLOSET ACCOMMODATION of the town, as regards the smaller tenements, is not by any means adequate. Roughly estimated it averages one to every three dwellings. Where gross instances of insufficiency are met with in the course of the present survey under the Housing Act, the accommodation is increased wherever the local circumstances permit of such additions. In the case of the new dwellings—recently erected—one water closet has been provided for each house.

SCAVENGING of the district is carried out by the Council. Daily collections are made. The refuse is conveyed from the houses in suitable bins and removed in carts to the destructor yard, where a Horsfall destructor is installed.

SANITARY INSPECTIONS.—Apart from the Housing Survey, i.e. in the usual routine, numbered 58. Arising from these 15 defects in flushing were dealt with. 12 accumulations of manure dealt with, 8 choked gullies and drains, 7 ventilating stacks erected.

THE SCHOOLS are in good sanitary condition and are supplied with a sufficiency of up-to-date sanitary conveniences. I have been duly notified of the occurrence of infectious disease, and the precautions taken to check the spread of infection by the principals of each institution.

THE MILK SUPPLY.—I inspected the dairies and cowsheds during the year, and found them to be well kept and in sanitary condition. In the month of September a cow in milk was noticed by the veterinary inspector in the market as presenting symptoms of tuberculosis. Having confirmed his suspicion by the tuberculin test, the animal was quarantined and subsequently destroyed by order of the County Council. Every precaution was adopted to prevent the infection of other cattle.

BAKEHOUSES AND SLAUGHTER HOUSES were severally inspected by me. They were in good condition and well conducted.



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SALE OF FOOD AND DRUGS ACT.—During the year formal samples of the following commodities were analysed and found genuine:—Butter, 2; milk, 3; cream, 1; coffee, 1; sugar; 1, tea, 1. No informal samples were taken.

THE INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFICATION ACT.—Five cases of diphtheria were notified. The infected premises were visited and the usual enquiries made in order, if possible, to discover the source of infection. As I have already stated the disease appears to be endemic in this town, and that it has not been possible hitherto to provide you with a positive reason for that fact. I consider, however, that we are in a better position in this respect than formerly. The outbreaks of recent years have not been nearly so extensive and were characterised by mildness for the most part.

THE ISOLATION HOSPITAL has been well attended to during the year. Three cases of diphtheria were treated there successfully. A steam disinfecter is shortly to be installed in a suitable building in the grounds of the Hospital, and certain additions to the Hospital itself are under consideration.

OTHER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.—An epidemic of mumps and chicken pox occurred in the early months of the year, and in the autumn measles broke out. Education in the schools was thereby much affected. From the General School there were excluded 19 boys and 18 girls on account of mumps. The Infants' department of this school was closed from the 9th April to May 5th, for the same disease, 20 scholars being affected. From the National School, 24 boys and 10 girls were excluded.—The Infants' department was closed from 29th April to the 19th May, when 35 of the children had been excluded. From the Allington School, 40 children were excluded in the spring on account of chicken pox. The school was closed from Nov. 14th to Dec. 5th, when some 40 scholars had been excluded through measles.

TUBERCULOSIS.—Under the recent Acts, 1908 and 1911, 29 cases of this disease were notified. Of these 23 were pulmonary infections, and the remainder, instances of the disease in other parts. Fifteen of the cases of Phthisis were insured persons and seven of them were sent for treatment to Sanatoria, the rest receiving domiciliary treatment at home, including sanatorium benefit. Three patients were provided with shelters. Of the whole number of cases, whether insured or not, 9 were sent to Sanatoria and 5 were provided with shelters in their own homes. The leaflet containing instructions for infected households are being distributed. Disinfection of premises is carried out in cases of death or removals wherever possible, and a tuberculosis dispensary is shortly to be established (on the 11th March, 1914), which will afford treatment and guidance to all afflicted with the disease, whether insured patients or not.

THE HOUSING OF THE WORKING CLASSES.—The number of Houses Inspected under the Act was 111. The number of houses considered to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be absolutely unfit for human habitation was *nil*. Two Representations were made to the Sanitary Authority for closing orders. In 55 instances notices were served to owners of the houses to remedy structural defects. The Section of dwelling houses inspected during the year comprises the area included between South Street and South Mill Lane, and extending on the one hand from Church Street to South Mills, on the other, from Church Street to Friends' Meeting House. I personally visited and inspected this section with the Surveyor. The defects found in most instances were of a minor character, having relation to faults in pavings, roofs, gutters, eaves, ceilings, and flooring. In many cases the outer walls were thin, and the living rooms small and cramped, with low ceilings, and damp walls. In some eight instances the defects were more serious. An obstructive building was discovered in one case which deprived a neighbouring dwelling of air and light. A recommendation has been made for its demolition. Other dwellings were found to be back to back houses, but with all their living rooms in the front of the houses. All the dwellings are served with the Company's water, and connected with the sewers. No ash pits were found. There were no cases of overcrowding in this section. I also inspected the houses in Diment Square, and some adjoining ones in North Allington by direction of the Sanitary Committee. On that quarter I made a special Report at the time. Put shortly—several insanitary, back to back dwellings were found to exist there, and an obstructive dwelling in the area of the Square. Notices were served on the owners to re-construct the insanitary dwellings, and to demolish the obstructive buildings. The orders have been carried out. The Water Closet Accommodations was found to be insufficient and that has been remedied. Two cases of overcrowding were noted. In those instances the families have been removed to more commodious dwellings. There is a distinct want of more new houses in the district. When that has been met we shall be in a better position to order the closure of such insanitary dwellings as I have referred to in the section surveyed. Since the Housing Act came into force, 26 houses have been built. I am convinced that in the improvement and sufficiency of wholesome dwellings for the people lies our best chance of combating the prevalence of any infective disease.

VITAL STATISTICS.—The number of births was 119, as against 107 in 1912, and the birth rate per 1,000 of the population works out at 20, the rate for England and Wales being 23·9. The deaths totalled 99, as against 87 in the previous year. The death rate was 16, as compared with 14 in 1912, the rate for England and Wales being 13·4. The average age of death was 59. The incidents at different periods of life was as follows:—

				in 1912.
Under 1 year	8 as compared with	5
1 and under 5 years	...	1	" "	3
5 " 15 "	...	2	" "	2
15 " 25 "	..	1	" "	2
25 " 65 "	...	42	" "	28
65 and upwards	...	44	" "	48

These figures, when taken in comparison with those of previous years, do not afford any great matter for comment. The whole number of deaths was greater than in the preceding two years, but that was compensated for by the considerable increase in the number of births. The causes of death, which have a special interest for us, I tabulate here:—To diphtheria, 1 death; phthisis, 6; other tubercular disease, 1; cancer and malignant disease, 10; organic heart disease, 7; pneumonia, 5. An analysis of the causation of death is fully set forth in Table III. The proportion due to the several causes tallies closely with that of recent years. We note a definite number which were due to tubercular infection and to malignant disease, but no marked increase in either of these categories. The infantile mortality attained a total of 8 deaths, as compared with 5 in 1912. They fall under the headings of congenital debility and atrophy, and infantile convulsions. No epidemic disease occurred amongst infants and young children, such as summer diarrhoea and bronchitis. Our means for the prevention of infantile mortality consists of the distribution of leaflets containing instructions on the care of infants, to the mothers, and the co-operation of the maternity nurse for the district, who gives practical hints to the former when the opportunity presents itself.

THE PORT OF BRIDPORT.—25 vessels from foreign ports arrived in the harbour during the year, and 42 coastwise ships. No sickness was reported from any vessel. The foreign vessels were inspected by me on their arrival, and the coastwise by the Borough Surveyor. It was only found necessary to serve one notice for sanitary defects, and that was complied with.

(Signed),

WALTER E. MANBY,

Medical Officer of Health.

Dated, 9th March, 1914.

